5/19/72

Dear Sylvia (Rt),

For the first time in the many years I have known you, in your letter of the 17th you are unpersuasive. If you do not want to consider doing that show a year hence, unwillingness is sufficient reason. Here you to offer it, I would then undertake to try and change your mind. But a year is a long time. If that is the reason, discussion can wait. There can always be a replacement.

Ordinarily, I do not seek these things. I haven't in some years because, for the most part, they are not only not worth the time they take but, unless they are to add what is new and significant and that to a large enough audience, I believe they have become counter-productive. Confrontations are an exception. Thus I have had two with Gerold Frank. Under the most adverse circumstances they have been productive (he blabs).

Both those you suggest as alternatives are excellent speakers. However, neither has adequate knowledge. Cyril is an expert in forensic medicine, I'd be willing to believe the country's best. But he really has done no work of his own, and a name on a show does not make an informative show. Sauvage can be brilliant, and I have been there when he was, as against Roberts. But brilliance is no replacement for knowledge. Percy Foreman did not fly all the way to New York for free TV publicity and then flee the makeup room when he learned he was to confront him because I am the skilled debater and he is not.

We have all become somewhat fuzzy, for a variety of reasons. The same will be true of our adversaries. If they consent, which I am inclined to doubt. Liebeler faced me one time, when I was at my very worst. He has since been silent, and the first thing he did thereafter was to get that wretch Lifton to sabotage a debate in which Liebeler was latched to an agreed-to, time-limiting format. I presume Wretch favored you with a copy of his total falsehood of that period. Ball has even apologized to me. So, I think neither of them will welcome a joint appearance.

Regardless, and despite any self-effacement, I doubt if any of us today has a better command of the 26 than you. In citing their chapter and their verse, I do believe you would be best. If this were not my opinion, I'd have thought only of Koch, despite his boasting vocal timidity, because of his knowledge of the unpublished material. His recall is better than mine on it. But in any confrontation with any of the legal pigs, I really do think you would be best, and that is the only reason I suggested it. Forget about the irrelevancy of being a debater. Leave that to the lawyers. Fact is the influential thing, and you are more than articulate.

So, let it wait. There is a year. Or, if and when asked, give only a conditional acceptance from which you can later, should you so decide, retreat with grace. My belief is that if this is to be an effective thing, as it can be with the large audience it reaches, it has the best prospect not from the unknown but from the known. Stuff it down their craws. Exposing, or even destroying them, publicly, can be much more impressive and effective than trying to bring new information to light. There is an unwillingness to consider that. But the dramatic possibilities of that medium and the adversaries ought not be forgotten. The bastards know it. Four of them, these and two others, one of whom is Specter, gave up a syndicated show 12/6/66 rather than confront me alone in a gang. So, if they cop out, in itself that will have significance, and should reach a large enough audience, if less than Cronkite's.

I have had to develop an interest in Bremer because of the there-little FBI involvement, and that is central to my work, and because I was paid to. If but a third of what I got as a youngster for two-thirds less writing, any sum is important to me today. I finished the piece tonight. And the more I got into it the more reluctant I found my self to continue with the spontaneous assumption that at last we had the long, unassisted nut. The way ones are not now. They begin with unaccountable money. Hurriedly,